

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): ~~Process A process~~ for the manufacture of a composite material (M) comprising a stage (E) according to which a dispersion (D) comprising :

- (a) at least one polymer,
- (b) at least one lamellar compound, and
- (c) at least one dispersing liquid,

is dried by atomization.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~Process The process~~ according to Claim 1,
~~characterized in that wherein~~ the polymer is a halogenated polymer.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~Process The process~~ according to Claim 2,
~~characterized in that wherein~~ the halogenated polymer is obtained by a polymerization process chosen from the aqueous microsuspension polymerization process and the aqueous emulsion polymerization process.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~Process The process~~ according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3, characterized in that Claim 1, wherein~~ a lamellar compound is chosen from smectites and Laponite® clays.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~Process The process~~ according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 4, characterized in that Claim 1, wherein~~ the dispersion (D) additionally comprises (d) at least one surface-active agent.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~Process~~ The process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 5, characterized in that it comprises~~ Claim 1, comprising a stage (E') of preparation of the dispersion (D), prior to stage (E), according to which the dispersion (D) is prepared by blending a dispersion (A) comprising (a), a portion of (c) and, if appropriate, (d) with a dispersion (B) comprising (b) and the balance of (c).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~Process~~ The process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 6, characterized in that~~ Claim 1, wherein the dispersion (D) additionally comprises (e) at least one peptizing agent.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~Process~~ The process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 7, characterized in that it comprises~~ Claim 1, comprising at least one stage (E''), subsequent to stage (E), according to which the composite material is treated so as to adjust the morphology thereof.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~Composite~~ A composite material (M') comprising :

- (a') at least one polymer,
- (b') at least one lamellar compound, and
- (d') at least 0.02 % by weight of at least one surface-active agent with respect to the weight of (a') in the dry state; composed of particles having a weight-average diameter D50 of less than or equal to 200 μm .

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): ~~Composite~~ The composite material according to Claim 9 or prepared by the process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, composed of particles with a weight-average diameter D50 of less than or equal to 100 μm .

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): ~~Composite~~ The composite material according to either one of ~~Claims 9 and 10~~ Claim 9 or prepared by the process according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, composed of particles with a weight-average diameter D50 of greater than or equal to 10 μm .

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): ~~Composite~~ The composite material according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 9 to 11~~ Claim 9 or prepared by the process according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, composed of particles having an average aspect ratio of less than or equal to 4.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~Method~~ A method for processing a composite material according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 9 to 12~~ Claim 9 or prepared by the process according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, which comprises a stage (E'') according to which a plastisol is prepared.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): ~~Method~~ A method for processing a composite material according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 9 to 12~~ Claim 9 or prepared by the process according to ~~any one of~~ ~~Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, which comprises a stage (E'') according to which the polymer of the material is brought to a temperature greater than or equal to its melting point or gelling temperature.